

LITERACY AS EVANGELISM





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LITERACY AS EVANGELISM

*Address by Frank C. Laubach at Annual Meeting
of Foreign Missions Conference January 1950,
Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania*

LET US PRAY: *If everything that is on thy mind happens tonight in every one of us, what will we do for the world? That is what we ask to happen. Take us all over and help us all hear thee speak, then give us the courage to say "yes" to it all. What wilt thou have us to do, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his Kingdom? Amen.*

I HAD TO PRAY, for I feel such a responsibility to God and the world that I tremble. It is your responsibility too. It is ours. We must walk through three tremendous doors which God is just swinging open to evangelize the whole non-Christian world.

When the city of Ephesus welcomed Paul, he wrote: "A wide door for effectual work has been opened for me, and there are many adversaries." One city! One wide door! My word! I speak now of three doors as big as half the world, which have just swung open for us, and there are many adversaries.

The First Door — Literacy

The first of these world doors is the new passion of three fifths of the human race to learn to read, and their readiness to accept the gospel when we teach them and witness. Hundreds of missionaries have been working on this method of teaching and evangelizing, some for thirty years. Now we know enough to speak with some authority. We know how to evangelize while we teach. We did not have the complete plan ten years ago nor even five years ago, but we have it now. We are praying that the entire Christian church will adopt literacy and evangelism as our opportunity to evangelize the non-Christian world in our generation. The dream of John R. Mott can begin to come true in this generation.

We have together made many essential discoveries. We have discovered that in most languages (excepting English, of course) teaching people to read does not require years, but can be done in hours, or days or weeks. It can be a short, easy and delightful process.

We have discovered that where non-Christians will not listen to straight preaching, they welcome you if you teach them, because they want to learn to read. We have discovered that if you love and pray while you teach, you open their ears and they listen to your gospel.

Literacy is the entering wedge. I first discovered this for myself among the Moros of the Philippine Islands. They were violently prejudiced against the gospel just as the people in Arabia still are. For fifteen years we made sporadic attempts to start religious services, but no Moros would come. Then we began teaching them to read. They had only sixteen sounds and our lessons were easy.

Now came the stunning surprise. Nobody at all would come to our religious service, but dozens, then hundreds, then thousands came to learn to read. We were thronged. We had four hundred volunteer teachers who brought in as many as a thousand names a month of people they taught to read. Our second discovery was that people liked to teach one another at home if we furnished the cheap little four page primer.

Our next discovery was that everybody we taught became a friend. When we first went to Lanao we did not feel safe to venture out of the village without soldiers. But within a year the whole province became our friends. The Moros began to come to our religious services, including the highest chiefs. When young Moros joined our church there was no open opposition even from priests. What had utterly failed for fifteen years by direct preaching became easy, delightful and swift when we began our literacy campaign. Literacy made the impossible easy.

The rest of the Philippines heard about this so-called miracle of Lanao. Dr. E. K. Higdon, then Secretary of the National Christian Council, invited me to make similar lessons in other Philippine dialects, and all the Philippine languages proved just as easy as Moro. The women's clubs and the Philippine Government adopted our method, and the news of it spread. Then letters began to come from other countries, asking us to exchange experiences with other missionaries. Scores were making the same discoveries in their countries that we had made in ours.

Daniel Fleming's book, *The Marks of a World Christian*, fell into my hands with the startling statement that two-thirds of the world were still illiterate. When I told my Moros, they clucked their tongues with delight, and said: "We can teach the world."

The Silent Billion Speaks

On our next furlough we came home by way of Asia and tried our method in seven countries. It worked, but each language group presented peculiar difficulties. Clearly we would need the pooled wisdom of the whole world to get the maximum results. For the past fifteen years I have worked with missionaries and governments in sixty-one countries in nearly two hundred languages. Together we missionaries have worked out a technique which we are convinced presents the Christian church with the best opening in 2000 years to go and make disciples of all nations.

For while we missionaries have been learning how to teach and win the world has been getting ready for us. This too was the hand of God. A vast change has taken place in the attitude of the illiterate three-fifths of the world. For ages they suffered in unresisting despair. But in *the past thirty years* they have come awake. The automobile, our tourists, the war, our soldiers, the vast military supplies, the airplanes, motion pictures, radios, newspapers, tell these millions that we have abundance, full stomachs, healthy bodies.

Now the Communists have come and told them that they need not stay down, fired them with longings to come up. They have always been hungry, in rags, exploited, but they saw no hope. Now they dare to hope. Across the sixty-one countries where I have worked I have seen over a billion people churning with immense longings that have never stirred the masses since the world began. Edwin Markham's "Man with the Hoe" has come true:

"O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this man . . .
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?"

Their determination to come up increases every year, to come up and to give their children the chance they never had. They will take the hand of anybody who reaches down to help them. They are coming up the Communist way or the Christian way, whichever hand reaches them first.

They hear two voices. One says: you are in poverty because the rich have kept you poor. Revolt.

The other voice says: knowledge is power. Educated people know how to take wealth from the ground and minerals and water. Learn their secret.

The multitudes are willing to try either way, they are on the way up. When we offer to teach them they grab at the chance as the Moros did in Mindanao. I have been thronged by thousands in Latin America, I have been thronged in Africa, I have been thronged in Asia and in the Islands of the Pacific. Last year before a thousand Moslems in Nigeria our group taught one hundred Moslems to read the first lesson. Then to our amazement they all fell on their faces before us and began to repeat a Moslem prayer. I was as shocked as Paul in Lystra, and said: "Get up. I want to shake hands with you in the good old American way." In Leopoldville, when we announced we had to leave, the large crowd of women students shrieked with hysteria for they had not yet been taught.

New Guinea — 1949

Last May Secretary Theodore Fricke arranged for my son Bob and Phil Gray, the artist, and me to visit the wildest remaining area on this globe, the immense island of New Guinea. Missionaries have converted the people on the coast, but the interior is still swarming with cannibals; nobody knows how many. We made lessons in thirteen languages at Lae, on the north coast, and then flew with 750 copies of the Medlpa language to the interior, where a Lutheran missionary has a beachhead. The people in this area haven't been cannibals for fifteen years. As we approached the air field we saw thousands of people like flies, and had to circle around several times while they were chased from the field. When we landed they thronged us, wanting to learn right away. In a half hour we had our chart out teaching them, and we kept it up morning, noon and night for a week. It was bedlam, not a school, for everybody wanted to learn first. At the end of a week we had taught thirty-six the first book. On Sunday we gave those thirty-six diplomas in the church service, as we always do when they finish the first book. Then we showed them how to teach. Then everybody went outside where about sixteen thousand people had gathered. All day Sunday those savages, painted hideously as the very devil, danced

and shouted and jumped to celebrate this great event. The big chiefs met in solemn council, and after two hours came to tell us what they had decided.

"This is the greatest event in our history," they said. "You have done more for us than anybody who ever lived. We like your religion because it does so much for us. We want to be Christians. So we have voted to request you to go and baptize everybody right away. Sixteen thousand of them! All excepting us chiefs. We are in trouble. You do not allow polygamy and we have many wives. We don't know how to get rid of them in a Christian fashion suddenly. But we want you to baptize us too, when we are ready. We are in deep earnest."

Sixteen thousand sounds large. But *sixty thousand* times that many, a thousand million people, are willing to say "Baptize us right away" if we will come and teach them to read. They welcome the chance as a drowning man grasps a helping hand. They love you for lifting them out of their misery, they want your religion. They are like the man born blind when Jesus opened his eyes, who faced the foes of Jesus and cried "I was blind and now I see."

One foolish man asked me how I made the illiterates *want to learn*. I replied "That isn't our problem. Our problem is how to chase them home at night when we are tired out." Here is "a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood," can lead millions to Christ. It won't last beyond this century, for every nation is determined to read.

Governments Welcome Us

Next Tuesday we will land in Liberia at the Firestone airfield. There we will see sixty thousand employees ready to learn. Then we will go on to Monrovia where the President of Liberia will launch a nation-wide literacy campaign in cooperation with all the missions. Norma Bloomquist of the Lutheran Mission is directress of the national campaign. The government wants two million people to learn to read as fast as it can be done, and it wants us to make them all Christians.

Here is good news. Every government in the 61 countries I have helped, has welcomed us and officially expressed its appreciation. Not one government has thus far prevented us from teaching illiterates in our homes and witnessing for Christ while we taught. Governments sometime forbid our teaching religion

in schools, but not at home in our one by one teaching.

When we offer to teach at home without salaries, without building new schools, governments see that this is the cheap swift way to get their countries literate. Every country would be delighted if we could do it all. This public service makes them appreciate the value of the Christian spirit. They are ready to believe that Evangelical Christianity is the inspiration of universal education. When we tell them that Protestant countries are over 95% literate while non-Christian countries are 90% illiterate, they see the reason. When we teach because we love people, our actions are telling them that the Christian compassion and desire to help people is a necessity for their country. One deed of compassionate service is worth a million words.

Moreover all the governments outside the iron curtain are afraid of the whisper campaigns fomented by the Communists, afraid of conspiracies to overthrow them. The Communists have put governments on their good behavior. The people want education and the governments want to please them. This is the main reason, I think, why so many governments since the war have invited us and even paid our expenses to come and help them. The officials know we are Christian missionaries. I am working with missionaries all week and on Sunday, but I have never been warned by any government to soft-pedal my religion and I never do. These governments do not fear Christianity, it is conspiracies organized by Communists that they fear. If we help these governments launch literacy campaigns the Communists are actually helping us. They scare the government, they stir up the people's longings, and we fulfill them.

It was God, too, who made UNESCO call literacy it's number one project.

Last year we went to Thailand at the invitation of the Thai government. In fact they offered to pay the way of three of us by air all around the world. UNESCO had recommended us. The Thai government is afraid of the Communist influence among the masses and needed us to satisfy the people with education. This is why they gave us such wonderful cooperation that the missionaries were astonished. Christians and Buddhists worked side by side and loved one another. Missions had had a small response among the Buddhists of Thailand when they merely opened churches and preached. But when Dr. Cort opened a hospital and helped them with their great health problems, the government cooperated enthusiastically. Dr. Cort preached to

every patient he ever treated and he won thousands of converts. When he left Thailand last May he was given the highest decoration ever given a foreigner by the government of Thailand. He had made more Christians than any ten other missionaries and was the most beloved missionary in the history of that country. The lesson is clear. A strong Buddhist country needs some form of Christian service to condition people to hear the gospel.

Christian Service Opens the Way

Modern missions need to learn this lesson. In every country where people are prejudiced against Christianity, evangelism has to be accompanied by service to condition the people to listen to the gospel. It is the entering wedge.

There is only one country in all Asia today where people will listen in large numbers without some form of Christian service. That is Japan. But the service has already been performed by Kagawa in his cooperatives and by MacArthur when he astonished the Japanese by working to help instead of punishing them.

In India last April the new government nearly killed us with hard work and kindness. In every language they are using the lessons we made twelve years ago. Eighty-five per cent of the people of India and 95% of Pakistan are illiterate. They propose to give these illiterates the franchise, yet they are afraid of the consequences. They want these people to become literate more than anything else in the world. So in Calcutta, Allahabad, Jubulpore, Nagpur and Madras the teachers and government officials hardly gave us time to rest, day or night. New Delhi, the capital, was the worst of all. On Sunday, our last day, the Governor General of India wanted us for dinner. I told him the Minister of Education had already invited us. Then, he said to come for tea, but the Methodist church had us speaking. So he waited in the great government building Sunday night until 7:30 and talked with us about literacy in India until we had to run off to catch the train for Pakistan.

I was glad to escape to Pakistan for a rest, but I found it just as desperate as India. The Moslems forgot all about our religious difference while they sought help in their enormous problem.

I loved those Mohammedans as brothers. You always do when you work with them in the field of literacy. Here is the soft spot in Islam. The people of Islam are 95% illiterate, and yet the first page of their Koran tells people to read.

In Pakistan I heard a marvelous story. During the riots which followed the division of Pakistan and India, millions of Hindus fled from Pakistan, and millions of Moslems fled from India. Hundreds of thousands were destitute. The Christians had banks of food, medicine and clothes intended for China. They fed the hungry and treated the wounded and clothed the naked asking no questions. In a few days Hindus began to save their lives by wearing crosses to make the Moslems think they were Christians, and the Moslems wore crosses to deceive the Hindus. Today Christianity is more popular in northern India than it has ever been. Service was the entering wedge. Man's extremity became God's opportunity, and the Christians said yes to need.

In Korea last June we found the government extremely eager to prove to its people how much it loves them. I heard the statement repeated several times that perhaps fifty per cent of the people south of the 38th parallel are Communists. The United States government is working very hard in Korea to hold the friendship of the people. The American Embassy paid for our lessons when we had them finished, paid for them out of appropriations of the American War Department. The President of Korea told me that he would do everything in his power to promote our campaign, because he said the people are eager for education. And the Minister of Education stood up before a great crowd at the American Embassy, and in a fiery speech said: "This is what the people want. I will move heaven and earth to give it to them."

No, we are not having trouble with governments. We are having trouble with some missionaries who have one track minds. They often fall into ruts, get over-burdened with routine that produces little fruitage, and are often slow to adopt new ways of evangelism. Teach those missionaries our literacy techniques, and they will march straight into the hearts of the people and will lead many to Christ.

You leaders can bring good news to many a defeated missionary. There is no limit to the number who can be won into the church if the missionaries have this special training, and then organize the churches to teach and win non-Christians.

A New Christian Strategy

Here is our strategy. In the non-Christian regions we have about twelve million active native evangelical Christians, scat-

tered among twelve hundred million non-Christian illiterates. That is one Christian for every 100 non-Christian illiterates. We must train those twelve million Christians each one to teach and win one in his own home. There are about 120,000 churches with an average of 100 members. We must organize every church into a teaching evangelizing army. The technique which we have worked out during the past few years must be taught to each church. It is like this:

Lessons are prepared and then printed in adequate quantities. Then one lesson book is ready for each church member. One Sunday morning the missionary or literacy leader goes to the church and tells the members that each one is to teach and win one non-Christian neighbor at home. Each member then prayerfully writes down the name of the neighbor he will offer to teach. Then the method of teaching is explained. We have made the lessons easy to teach; the teacher follows the text, loves his student and prays as he teaches. He is taught how to witness for Christ while teaching. Thank God simple people can witness for Christ as effectively as seminary graduates! Often after a few days a student will ask to be a Christian. When the first primer has been taught (in a week or two) students are brought to the church for a graduation ceremony. As they march forward to receive their diplomas, the officers of the church give them a hearty handshake, the first time they ever were in that church. Then they are started studying the *Story of Jesus*. When that is finished they can read the Gospels. This sort of campaign can be repeated by the congregation several times a year. There is no reason why a church should not double its membership in a year. In many places it is now faster than that. It was at Pentecost. I was in a field in India where they had baptized 10,000 a year for three consecutive years. Japan is likely to see even larger results than that. Wherever people are won to a love of Christ by some kind of Christian service, they come in masses as they did in New Guinea. Literacy campaigns, full of the love of Christ and of witness, predispose the people to want Christ so that a mass movement begins.

How can we organize and train 12 million Christians in 120,000 native churches? Here is our proposal. Let us train 12,000 missionaries, one missionary for every hundred churches, so that he in turn can go out and train those churches. These 12,000 missionaries require careful training, for this is an art and its success depends upon the thoroughness with which it is taught.

I do *not* mean 12,000 *new* missionaries. We now have 10,000 missionaries on the field. We can train them during their furlough. We can also train all new missionaries before they leave for the field. So the program we outline is well within our reach. It can begin right away and can reach its maximum efficiency in five years. I propose a five year plan of teach and win one in every mission field.

I do not mean that these 12,000 missionaries should drop what they are now doing. I mean that they should organize and direct this work in addition to what they are doing. I mean that it should have a high priority for the next five years. For example ordained evangelistic missionaries should make this their major method of evangelizing. It will be good for every congregation to put the burden of soul winning on the native laymen. I mean that the wives of missionaries should be trained to organize and direct these each one teach and win one churches. I mean that deaconesses and Bible Women should be trained to use this more effective way of doing their work. I mean that missionary teachers should be trained to organize their students into teaching bands. I mean that doctors and nurses should be trained to have patients in hospitals taught or teaching.

Every active missionary is influential in one or more native churches. Here he can direct and advise while the church organizes to teach and win souls. Thus literacy promises to multiply our efficiency in the major job of the church, which is to win souls to Jesus Christ.

Our plan then is to train 12,000 missionaries who will train 12 million native Christians to teach and win 12 hundred million non-Christian illiterates. How shall we train the twelve thousand missionaries quickly and thoroughly?

If you leaders who are here give us green lights, World Literacy will undertake to train the missionaries with your cooperation. It is big business, and we must not underestimate it, but it is within our powers, and God is back of us, pushing on ahead of us, opening doors.

Let each of you heads of denominations select the most efficient, evangelistic missionary in your denomination for us to train for a year. He must have a passion for souls. After he finishes his training, he will begin training *your* missionaries; he will teach some as they return from abroad and the new missionaries before they go abroad, in the most suitable centers. Some missionaries will get training at interdenominational centers, others

in denominational camps and schools. Soon centers will be set up abroad to train on the field. The aim is not to let one missionary escape. Get them all inoculated and make sure the inoculation takes.

The Second Door — Simple Literature

Here is the second door opening now. We must train our missionaries also to write simply and fascinatingly. For when people learn to read they have hungry minds. They are learning to read now at the rate of ten million a year. They can read easy matter slowly. But nearly all the Christian literature now being produced is over the heads of the new literates. It will be many years before they can read what we have been printing.

When William Randolph Hearst employs a new reporter he says: "If you ever use over seventeen words in a sentence, I'll know why." Yet the Hearst readers are one notch above our new literates. Ten or a dozen words are enough for them. They read so slowly that they cannot hold long sentences in mind. They must read words they already speak. This means that we must create a wholly new literature and a new body of writers.

The Communists have learned to do this and they are succeeding in a big way. In Calcutta I tore an article out of the papers written by the Red leader of China, Mao Tze-tung. He said that China has an army of writers who go down among the laborers, peasants, soldiers and shop keepers and study their language. They play upon their passions and try to meet their needs. All last year they captured China almost without firing guns; they did it with propaganda in the language of the people.

In Korea I called the Christian writers together and told them that they must write simply like the Communists. The best writer said: "If we wrote that way, the educated people would despise us. Besides, we don't know how." In every language of Latin America and Asia we Christians speak and write above the masses, and in most languages the Bible is too difficult for the new literates to read.

So we face the truly colossal task of preparing writers for the one hundred and fifty millions who have learned to read in the past fifteen years, and the ten millions who are learning every year. Since the governments have taken up literacy, the campaigns have got out of hand so far as literature is concerned. Nothing can stop it now. But we are not dismayed. Here is our

strategy. We plan to train some of these twelve thousand missionaries in the art of plain fascinating journalism. We have such a course in Syracuse University.

We need a thorough year-long course for the real experts. Then we must have shorter courses in literacy and writing for every missionary. It looks like an impossible task, yet when we get America thoroughly aroused we shall have enough and more than enough writers. Britain is much more aroused about this literature problem than we are in America. Britain and America together have far and away the greatest list of writers in all history. We have the experience, the presses, the paper, the brains, the money, more than half the world's wealth. We ought to hang our heads in shame to permit the Communists to capture the world from under our noses with ink. There is only one reason. They are on the job while we are only half awake to this opportunity.

This is the time to wake up. I hope every secretary here will go right to work to provide for the largest number of your own missionaries possible to be trained this spring, this summer, this fall, this next winter, in plain writing as well as literacy. Put pressure on your missionary schools, every one of them, to have these courses.

Then we must plan to send presses, to send thousands of tons of paper, to subsidize our books, to organize for distribution. This is going to cost us much more money than we now spend. How much?

If every Christian would add fifty cents to his benevolence budget this year for literacy and literature for the new literates, it would pay for the advance. This should not reduce the budget for other things. On the contrary this practical program increases the interest and the giving for missions.

You will know best how to do it in your own churches. It is the greatest highway for the church. It is also the most effective defense program for America against the desperate misery which endangers the peace. Here is what one Sunday School director did:

Miss Ethel Baader has a weekly program in an Upper Montclair, N. J. church, which thrills the children and trains them in habitual missionary giving. Each Sunday they bring a nickel for knowledge. They have brought 8,000 nickels in two years, and this pays for 8,000 of our first primers. It is impossible to exaggerate the value this has been to the children themselves, for they have studied where their nickels are going all over the world.

We appeal to you; set literacy and literature free from the

crippling poverty which makes our offices pitifully inadequate, our force too small, our efforts too weak. We talk like giants, but we must act like pygmies. Set us free to march in through these two doors which God has opened.

*The Third Door —
Christian Aid to Underdeveloped Areas*

There is now a new reason why we ought to plunge into this teaching and writing like giants and not like pygmies. And here is the third door. The United Nations last November 16 voted to send thousands of men and women to needy areas with technical skills. If the church is there teaching the illiterates and furnishing simple literature, we can lay the foundation for this world uplift program. Our writers will be ready to write the difficult text books of the agricultural experts and doctors and home economics experts in the language of the masses. We shall have the presses there ready to publish this useful literature. We shall have bookstores there ready to sell it. All of it can be shot full of the Christian spirit. We can become the bridge from these specialists to the common people.

I believe we should cooperate with the UN in another way, to find Christian technicians of all kinds and offer them to all governments and to international business. If they accept Christian technicians with a high sense of integrity and a great love for people all over the world, then the world will see something it has never before seen. It will be the first world-wide attempt in history to lift mankind in the spirit of Jesus. Christians will be Good Samaritans to a world fallen among thieves. We can, if we pray and work hard enough, put Christ where he wants to be and ought to be, at the center of the whole Point Four program.

The world thinks it wants technical skill, but it needs the character and the power of Jesus Christ more than it needs skill. It needs both, but it needs Christ more. When democracies fail, it is always because they lack integrity, they have "moral erosion." The voters sell out, or the election is a fraud, or the men elected forget their promises, or money is stolen. Honor, integrity, conscientiousness, dependability, fair play, a love of other people, a passion to help need, compassion, the love of Christ in the hearts of people, these are the qualities without which democracy cannot survive. These are the qualities which we must export in our technicians, or their work will all fail. Any other

kind of technician is likely to do more harm than good.

I do not believe in making people educated without making them Christian. Education helps bad men to do more harm. Knowledge will not save the world. Only Christ can do that. So the very success of this tremendous effort to lift the world depends upon sending out men full of the love of Jesus Christ. I beg of you, hunt up Christian technicians, train them, offer them. If we do that, then literacy and simple literature and technical aid will all work hand in hand in one powerful current to save the world.

Carlos Romulo said the other day that 1950 can be the greatest year in history. I believe that. He was thinking of the United Nations. But I am thinking of you here. What you decide is more fateful than the acts of the United Nations. You have the keys to the kingdom of heaven. It will be the greatest year in history only if you Christianize this world program, taking the Christian gospel into Point Four.

But thank God our literacy and literature programs have clear sailing. Nothing, nothing stands in our way save the vision and consecration of our Protestant churches. Our American people are waiting and even chafing for leadership. They know our military preparations are not saving us because our real enemy is misery and hate and despair, and guns only make these things worse. Our people want a program that they believe can lead to peace and freedom from fear. They are waiting for you to lead them. That is why this conference is so enormously fateful. You are deciding issues which will reverberate for a thousand years. God has thrown open three stupendous doors of opportunity to save the world. He calls you to a daring religion like the first Pentecost. He calls you to bold strong strides, to enormous new advance. He asks you to go forth to tell good news to America and to the poor people of the world. He calls you to awaken and convert and educate our churches, give them a vision that we have seen, setting them on fire to save the world. We can have such an ingathering of souls as never was seen in all history. One man said: "It never has been that way." No, but this is the century of the "never-yet." We never had a radio, nor airplanes, nor television, nor electric lights, nor atomic bombs. In the realm of science the impossible is happening. Frightened scientists are urging us to catch up spiritually with their awful inventions before we destroy ourselves. We too can have miracles of the never yet if we are big enough, inspired enough, if we have faith like the men who founded the church. We shall hear, not fifty thou-

sand on New Guinea, but a billion illiterate non-Christians of Asia and Africa say: "We want Christ. He does so much for us." The evangelization of the world in this generation which John R. Mott foresaw sixty years ago can begin before he leaves us. And this, and this, as all men know, is the only true pathway to peace on earth, good will among men.

A New Advance

Besides, all these illiterates are children of our Father for whom Christ died. He seeks them, he waits for us to win them, and this is *his* method. When they were blind he opened their eyes. Then when the multitude gathered he saved their souls. That is Christ's method. We need to practice the gospel which we preach as Christ did. They turn to us in throngs whenever we open their blind eyes. You have been praying for *advance*, talking about *advance*, gathering money for advance. God is doing his part, swinging the doors of the world wide open and saying: "Here is advance, immense beyond anything you dreamed, if you come and help them out of their misery, their hunger, their disease, their prison."

Heaven knows we Protestants need a tonic. The Catholics and Communists are celebrating their triumphs, while we content ourselves with trying to *unite*. We haven't time to wait until we unite. Now, now, 1950 is the time. The finest way to unite is on a program in which all of us agree to unite. Thank God every branch of the church believes in literacy and in winning souls. This is the project on which we are already united, on which we have no difference of opinion.

I am speaking for a billion illiterates who want your help, and need to know your Christ. But I also feel above and around me an invisible host which no man can number working upon your hearts. You and I are so important for all mankind. Heaven trembles lest we may prove too small, our deeds too small and too late, lest we be bound by our weak habits when God summons us to great deeds.

I am not afraid of the Communists, not afraid of the Catholics. I'm afraid of some of the Protestants who have neither fire nor vision—men here who begin to see why this might be hard, or unprecedented, or premature if not properly surveyed, or too informal, or too big. The put-on-the-brakes type, the go-slow type alone can ruin God's program. Oh ye of little faith, keep

your foot off the brake. Let God do the braking if he doesn't want to save those souls. Who ever heard of God holding us back? He is impatient. He weeps over us as he did over Jerusalem. We have nothing to fear but fear; we shall not fail when God is pushing us. I tell you what we need to fear, *fear the way we are now*, for we aren't good enough, hot enough, high enough, daring enough, far-visioned enough, for this splendid hour. Fear the way we are now. We aren't good enough for God. Is God satisfied with what we call Advance? Can you doubt that God's answer is: "No!"

But will the American people respond? I have talked about this program in a hundred cities, and I know the people are eager. They are eager for something Christian they can do for the world besides wringing their hands in helpless frustration. The people of America are ready and they will follow you. America needs to be led. America waits for you. The most encouraging thing about Christians today is their sense that they are not good enough. With the bomb over our heads and the Communists threatening us, millions want to repent. With eighty percent of the world's gold, American Christians are unhappy about those thousand millions who are hungry and miserable. They feel like hypocrites, only pretending to follow the cross, and they want us to lead them out to meet the world's need. America waits for you leaders; the illiterate billion wait for you and the nations welcome you. It is the call of God. Lead America through these three doors and win the world to Christ!





COMMITTEE ON WORLD LITERACY AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.